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MESSAGE

OF

PRESIDENT DAVIS.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the Confederate States of America:

It is with satisfaction that I welcome your presence at an earlier day than that usual for your session, and with confidence that I invoke the aid of your counsels at a time of such public exigency. The campaign which was commenced almost simultaneously with your session, early in May last, and which was still in progress at your adjournment in the middle of June, has not yet reached its close. It has been prosecuted on a scale and with an energy heretofore unequalled. When we revert to the condition of our country at the inception of the operations of the present year, to the magnitude of the preparations made by the enemy, the number of his forces, the accumulation of his warlike supplies, and the prodigality with which his vast resources have been lavished in the attempt to render success assured; when we contrast the numbers and means at our disposal for resistance, and when we contemplate the results of a struggle apparently so unequal, we cannot fail, while rendering the full meed of deserved praise to our generals and soldiers, to perceive that a power higher than man has willed our deliverance, and gratefully to recognize the protection of a kind Providence in enabling us successfully to withstand the utmost efforts of the enemy for our subjugation.

At the beginning of the year the State of Texas was partially in possession of the enemy, and large portions of Louisiana and Arkansas lay apparently defenceless. Of the Federal soldiers who invaded Texas, none are known to remain except as prisoners of war. In northwestern Louisiana, a large and well appointed army, aided by a powerful fleet, was repeatedly defeated and deemed itself fortunate in finally escaping with a loss of one-third its numbers, a large part of its military trains and many transports and gunboats. The enemy's occupation of that State is reduced to the narrow district commanded by the guns of his fleet. Arkansas has been recovered with the exception of a few fortified posts, while our forces have penetrated into central Missouri, affording to our oppressed brethren in that State an opportunity, of which many have availed themselves, of striking for liberation from the tyranny to which they have been subjected.

On the east of the Mississippi, in spite of some reverses, we have much cause for congratulation. The enemy hoped to effect, during the present year, by concentration of his forces, the conquest which he had previously failed to accomplish by more extended operations. Compelled therefore, to withdraw or seriously to weaken the strength of the armies of occupation at different points, he has afforded us the opportunity of recovering possession of extensive districts of our territory. Nearly the whole of northwestern Mississippi, of northern Alabama, and of western Tennessee are again in our possession; and all attempts to penetrate from the coast line into the interior of the Atlantic and Gulf States have been baffled. On the entire ocean and gulf coast of the Confederacy, the whole success of the enemy, with the enormous naval resources at his command, has been limited to the capture of the outer defences of Mobile Bay.

If we now turn to the results accomplished by the two great armies, so con-

cently relied on by the invaders as sufficient to secure the subversion of our Government and the subjection of our people to foreign domination, we have still greater cause for devout gratitude to Divine Power. In southwestern Virginia, successive armies which threatened the capture of Lynchburg and Saltville have been routed and driven out of the country, and a portion of Eastern Tennessee reconquered by our troops. In Northern Virginia extensive districts formerly occupied by the enemy are now free from their presence. In the lower Valley, their general rendered desperate by his inability to maintain a hostile occupation, has resorted to the infamous expedient of converting a fruitful land into a desert by burning its mills, granaries, and homesteads, and destroying the food, standing crops, live stock and agricultural implements of peaceful non-combatants. The main army, after a series of defeats in which its losses have been enormous; after attempts by raiding parties to break up our railroad communications, which have resulted in the destruction of a large part of the cavalry engaged in the work; after constant repulse of repeated assaults on our defensive lines, is, with the aid of reinforcements, but with, it is hoped, waning prospects of further progress in the design, still engaged in an effort to capture the town of Petersburg.

The army of Gen. Sherman, although succeeding at the end of the summer in obtaining possession of Atlanta, has been unable to secure any ultimate advantage from this success. The same General who in February last, marched a large army from Vicksburg to Meridian with no other result than being forced to march back again, was able, by the aid of greatly increased numbers, and after much delay, to force a passage from Chattanooga to Atlanta, only to be for the second time compelled to withdraw on the line of his advance, without obtaining control of a single mile of territory beyond the narrow track of his march, and without gaining ought beyond the precarious possession of a few fortified points in which he is compelled to maintain heavy garrisons, and which are menaced with recapture.

The lessons afforded by the history of this war are fraught with instruction and encouragement. Repeatedly during the war have formidable expeditions been directed by the enemy against points ignorantly supposed to be of vital importance to the Confederacy. Some of these expeditions have at immense cost, been successful but in no instance have the promised fruits been reaped. Again in the present campaign, was the delusion fondly cherished that the capture of Atlanta and Richmond would, if effected, end the war by the overthrow of our government and the submission of our people. We can now judge by experience how unimportant is the influence of the former event upon our capacity for defence, upon the courage and spirit of the people and the stability of the government. We may, in like manner, judge that if the campaign against Richmond had resulted in success instead of failure; if the valor of the army under the leadership of its accomplished commander had resisted in vain the overwhelming masses which were, on the contrary, decisively repulsed; if we had been compelled to evacuate Richmond as well as Atlanta, the Confederacy would have remained as erect and defiant as ever. Nothing could have been changed in the purpose of its Government in the indomitable valor of its troops, or in the unquenchable spirit of its people. The baffled and disappointed foe would in vain have scanned the reports of your proceedings, at some new legislative seat, for any indication that progress had been made in his gigantic task of conquering a free people. The truth, so patent to us, must ere long be forced upon the reluctant Northern mind. There are no vital points, on the preservation of which the continued existence of the Confederacy depends. There is no military success of the enemy which can accomplish its destruction. Not the fall of Richmond, nor Wilmington, nor Charleston, nor Savannah, nor Mo-

bile, nor of all combined, can save the enemy from the constant and exhaustive drain of blood and treasure which must continue, until he shall discover that no peace is attainable, unless based upon the recognition of our indefeasible rights.

Before leaving this subject it is gratifying to assure you that the military supplies essentially requisite for public defence will be found, as heretofore, adequate to our needs; and that abundant crops have rewarded the labor of the farmer, and rendered attractive the inhuman attempt of the enemy to produce, by devastation, famine among the people.

FINANCES.

Your special attention is earnestly invited to the report of the Secretary of the Treasury, submitted in conformity with law. The facts therein disclosed are far from discouraging, and demonstrate, that with judicious legislation, we shall be enabled to meet all the exigencies of the war from our abundant resources, and avoid, at the same time, such an accumulation of debt as would render at all doubtful our capacity to redeem it.

The total receipts into the treasury for the two quarters ending on the 30th September, 1864, were \$115,191,550, which sum added to the balance of \$308,282,722 that remained in the Treasury on the 1st April last, forms a total of \$723,474,272. Of this total, not far from half, that is to say, \$342,560,327, have been applied to the extinction of the public debt, while the total expenditures have been \$272,378,505, leaving a balance in the Treasury on the 1st October, 1864, of \$108,434,440.

The total amount of the public debt, as exhibited on the books of the Register of the Treasury, on the 1st October, 1864, was \$1,147,970,208, of which \$529,340,090 were funded debt, bearing interest, \$283,380,150 were treasury notes of the new issue, and the remainder consisted of the former issue of treasury notes which will be converted into other forms of debt and will cease to exist as currency on the 31st of next month.

The report, however, explains that, in consequence of the absence of certain returns from distant officers, the true amount of the debt is less, by about twenty one and a half millions of dollars, than appears on the books of the Register, and that the total public debt on the 1st of last month may be fairly considered to have been \$1,126,381,095.

The increase of the public debt during the six months from the 1st April to the 1st October, was \$97,650,780, being rather more than \$16,000,000 per month, and it will be apparent, on a perusal of the report, that this augmentation would have been avoided, and a positive reduction of the amount would have been effected, but for defects in the legislation on the subject of the finance, which are pointed out in the report, and which seem to admit of easy remedy.

In the statements just made the foreign debt is omitted. It consists only of the unpaid balance of the loan known as the cotton loan. This balance is but \$2,200,000 and is adequately provided for by about 250,000 bales of cotton owned by the Government, even if the cotton be rated as worth but six pence per pound.

There is one item of the public debt not included in the tables presented, to which your attention is required. The bounty bonds promised to our soldiers by the third section of the act of 17th February, 1864, were deliverable on the 1st October. The Secretary has been unable to issue them by reason of an omission in the law, no time being therein fixed for the payment of the bonds.

The aggregate appropriations called for by the different departments of the Government, according to the estimates submitted with the report, for the six months ending on the 30th June, 1865, amount to \$438,102,679, while the Secretary estimates that there will remain unexpended, out of former appropriations, on the 1st January, 1865, a balance of \$467,416,504. It would, therefore, seem that former estimates have been largely in excess of actual expenditures, and that no additional appropriations are required for meeting the needs of the public service ap-

to the 1st July of next year. Indeed, if the estimates now presented should prove to be as much in excess of actual expenditures, as has heretofore been the case, a considerable balance will still remain unexpended at the close of the first half of the ensuing year.

The chief difficulty to be apprehended in connection with our finances, results from the depreciation of the treasury notes, which seem justly to be attributed by the Secretary to two causes, redundancy in amount and want of confidence in ultimate redemption for both of which, remedies are suggested that will commend themselves to your consideration as being practicable as well as efficient.

The main features of the plan presented are substantially these: 1st. That the faith of the Government be pledged that the notes shall ever remain exempt from taxation. 2d. That no issue shall be made beyond that which is already authorized by law. 3d. That a certain fixed portion of the annual receipts from taxation during the war shall be set apart specially for the gradual extinction of the outstanding amount until it shall have been reduced to \$150,000,000; and 4th. The pledge and appropriation of such proportion of the tax in kind, and for such number of years after the return of peace, as shall be sufficient for the final redemption of the entire circulation. The details of the plan, the calculations on which it is based, the efficiency of its operation, and the vast advantages which would result from its success are fully detailed in the report, and cannot be fairly presented in a form sufficiently condensed for this message. I doubt not it will receive from you that earnest and candid consideration which is merited by the importance of the subject.

The recommendations of certain provisions of the tax laws which produce inequality to the burthen of taxation; for exempting all Government loans from taxation on capital, and from any adverse discrimination in taxation on income derived from them; for placing the taxation of other corporate bodies; for securing the payment into the treasury of that portion of the bank circulation which is liable to confiscation, because held by alien enemies; for the conversion of the interest bearing treasury notes now outstanding into coupon bonds; and for the quarterly collection of taxation; all present practical questions for legislation, which, if wisely devised, will greatly improve the public credit, and alleviate the burthens now imposed by the extreme and unnecessary depreciation in the value of the currency.

The returns of the Produce Loan Bureau are submitted with the report, and the information is conveyed, that the Treasury Agency in the trans-Mississippi Department has been fully organized, and is now in operation, with promise of efficiency and success.

The provisions heretofore made to some extent for increasing the compensation of public officers, civil and military, is found to be in some places inadequate to their support; perhaps not more so anywhere than in Richmond, and inquiry, with a view to appropriate remedy, is suggested to your consideration. Your notice is also called to the condition of certain officers of the Treasury, who were omitted in the laws heretofore passed for the relief of other public officers, as mentioned in the report of the Secretary of the Treasury.

DEPARTMENT OF WAR.

The condition of the various branches of the military service is stated in the accompanying report of the Secretary of War. Among the suggestions made for legislative action with a view to add to the numbers and efficiency of the army, all of which will receive your consideration, there are some prominent topics which merit special notice.

The exemption from military duty now accorded by law to all persons engaged in certain specific pursuits or professions is shown by experience to be unwise, nor is it believed to be defensible in theory. The defence of home, family and country is universally recognized as the paramount political duty of every member of society, and in a form of government like ours, and in a form of government like ours,